

60,130-2054; 01MRA0230

REMARKS

Claims 1-3 remain pending in the application. New dependent claims 4-11 have been added.

Claims 1-3 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Stein (US 5462421). Claim 1 recites the step of curing a curable material to form an inner shell that reaches an edge of cut on a rim of the outer shell. Stein does not disclose such a step.

Stein discloses an upper mold 14, a lower mold 18, and a slide 74 with a trim blade 74b. A vinyl sheet 102 (outer shell) is placed in the lower mold 18 and is hooked over pins 92 (Figure 3). A glass fiber sheet 104 is placed on top of vinyl sheet 102. The mold is closed and the two-part reactive polyurethane system is injected as a liquid into the mold cavity 34 to produce a foam layer 110. See col. 4, lines 13-17 and 37-40.

After the foam has set up, hydraulic units move the slide 74 inward such that the trim blade 74b engages upper mold inner surface 30, cutting through the vinyl layer 102 and fiber mat 104, which finish trims the panel 100. See col. 4, lines 46-58. Thus, the method of Stein is very different than that set forth in claim 1.

First, the rim of the outer shell is clearly shown as extending outside of the mold. See Figures 4 and 5. Thus, the curable material cannot reach to an edge of cut on a rim of the outer shell as defined. Further, trimming or cutting in Stein occurs after mold has closed and subsequent to producing a foam layer. Finally, claim 1 recites the step of closing the foaming tool such that a seal in the foaming tool presses against the rim of the outer shell inwardly. Stein does not disclose any type of seal in the foaming tool that presses the rim inwardly.

Claim 3 recites that the seal plastically deforms the outer shell when the foaming tool is being closed. Stein does not disclose any type of seal that deforms the outer shell as defined in the claims. In Stein, the outer portion of the rim is not subjected to any forces when the foaming tool is closed. In the area of the outer shell acted upon by the foaming tool, the outer shell is supported by a sealing ring 90. As shown by comparing Figures 3 and 4, the rim remains in the same position and orientation irrespective of the condition of the foaming tool. The sealing ring 90 clearly does not deform the outer shell in any way.

Thus, for the many reasons set forth above, claims 1-3 are not anticipated by Stein.

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Claims 1-3 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Bohm (US 6499797) in view of Stein. The examiner argues that Bohm discloses foaming a foam material to form an inner shell that reaches an edge of cut on the rim, referring to Figures 1-6. Applicant respectfully disagrees with the examiner's interpretation of Bohm.

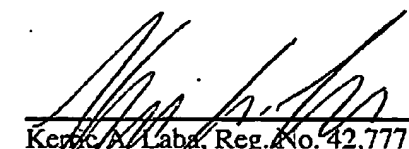
Bohm discloses several different embodiments. In the embodiment of Figures 1 and 2 the edge is cut off after foaming has already occurred. See col. 5, lines 55-63. Further, in this embodiment it is clear that seal 10 does not press the rim of the outer shell inwardly as defined in claim 1.

In the embodiment of Figure 3, edges of outer shell 6 abut at seal 16 or leg 18 of the guide rail 14. As the surface of the rim of the outer shell lies flat against seal 16 no curable material can reach this surface as defined in claim 1. Similarly, with regard to the embodiment of Figure 4, the cut edge of the rim is completely covered by seal 16, as are the cut edges shown in Figures 5 and 6. Again, it is also clear from these embodiments that the seals are not configured to press the rim of the outer shell inwardly as defined in claim 1.

Thus, Bohm does not disclose, suggest, or teach the steps of closing a foaming tool such that the seal in the foaming tool presses against the rim of the outer shell inwardly, and curing the curable material to form an inner shell that reaches an edge of cut on the rim of the outer shell. For the reasons set forth above, Stein also does not disclose, suggest, or teach these steps as defined in claim 1. Thus, claims 1-3 are allowable over the recited combination.

Applicant believes that no additional fees are due, however, the Commissioner is authorized to charge Deposit Account No. 50-1482 in the name of Carlson, Gaskey & Olds for any additional claim fees.

Respectfully submitted,



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